

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY FREETOWN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LOME PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

S E C R E T ABIDJAN 1689

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NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, LI, GV, SG, IV
SUBJECT: HOUPHOUET'S COMMENTS ON MONROVIA SUMMIT MEETING

REF: (A) MONROVIA 1159, (B) CONAKRY 0315, (C) CONAKRY 0230
(NOTAL), (D) LOME 0317 (NOTAL), (E) STATE 023487 (NOTAL)

1. IN MEETING YESTERDAY AFTERNOON WITH PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-
BOIGNY DEVOTED PRINCIPALLY TO OTHER SUBJECTS (SEPTELS),
HE TOLD ME THAT DATE FOR SUMMIT MEETING WITH SEKOU TOURE
IN MONROVIA WAS FIXED FOR MARCH 16. I MENTIONED THAT
WE HAD JUST LEARNED THAT SEKOU TOURE HAD ARRIVED
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EARLIER TODAY IN MONROVIA AND ASKED HOUPHOUET WHETHER
THIS VISIT WAS CONNECTED WITH FORTHCOMING SUMMIT MEETING.
HOUPHOUET SAID THAT GUINEAN LEADER'S TRIP WOULD PROVIDE
OCCASION FOR LATEST IN A SERIES OF PRELIMINARY EXCHANGES
PRIOR TO SUMMIT MEETING. IN FACT, SAID HOUPHOUET, WE
BELIEVE THAT THE SUMMIT MEETING ITSELF WILL LAST NO MORE
THAN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS BECAUSE ALL OF THE MAIN ISSUES WILL

ALREADY HAVE BEEN RESOLVED. THE COMMUNIQUE TO BE ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SUMMIT, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS ALREADY BEEN DRAFTED. "THE COMMUNIQUE INCLUDES ALL OF THE MAIN OBJECTIVES WE ARE SEEKING," SAID HOUPHOUET. "THE GUINEANS HAVE ACCEPTED IN PRINCIPLE THE WORDING WE HAVE PROVIDED AND SEKOU TOURE WILL PROBABLY ENDORSE THE WORDING PERSONALLY WHILE IN MONROVIA."

2. HOUPHOUET WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE MONROVIA MEETING ON MARCH 16 WOULD BE LEADERS OF GUINEA, IVORY COAST, SENEGAL, TOGO AND GAMBIA, AS WELL AS LIBERIAN PRESIDENT TOLBERT AS HOST. I TOLD HOUPHOUET THAT THE UNITED STATES WELCOMED THIS IMPORTANT EFFORT TO EASE TENSIONS IN THE AREA AND ASKED HIM WHETHER HE BELIEVED THAT SEKOU TOURE REALLY INTENDED TO REORIENT GUINEAN POLICY. HOUPHOUET SAID THAT HE BELIEVED SEKOU TOURE WAS SERIOUS. GUINEA FELT ISOLATED AND HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED BY THE INSUFFICIENCY OF THE ASSISTANCE IT HAD RECEIVED FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER COMMUNIST POWERS. THE COMMUNIQUE WOULD MAKE CLEAR, HE SAID, THAT A REAL CHANGE IN GUINEAN POLICY WAS TAKING PLACE. THIS, HE ADDED WITH SATISFACTION, WOULD MEAN THAT THE ONLY MILITANTLY REVOLUTIONARY STATE REMAINING IN WEST AFRICA WAS BENIN, A STATE WHICH WAS TOO SMALL, POOR AND UNSTABLE TO POSE A SERIOUS THREAT TO ITS NEIGHBORS.

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